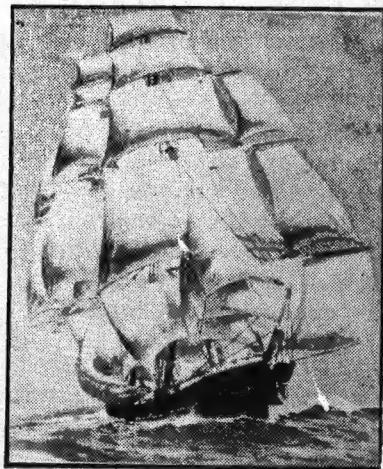


Cameron Wm B

The Yarn of the Howling Gale

(An Alberta Barque with a Bad Bight)



THE HOWLING GALE

Cameron Shipyards
ATHABASCA, ALBERTA

The Yarn of the Howling Gale

(An Alberta Barque with a Bad Bight)

CAMERON SHIPYARDS

*Oh, this is the tale of the Howling Gale
That voyaged the tropic seas;
From her smug home port of old Seafort
She sailed on a nor'east breeze;
She sailed away on an autumn day—
'Twas in 1935—
And out of her crew of sixty-two
But few came back alive:
But few came back alive, my lads,
And these be steeped in gloom;
They'll talk of heat, the price of wheat,
But not of the Gale's black doom;
They'll sit and stare, with a vacant air,
And mutter "Fee fo fi fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman—
Yo ho, and a bottle of rum!"*

I

THE GALE DEPARTS

From her mizzen peak, a ruddy streak,
Flew the badge of the twin P P
(The last the cue to Plenty,
The first to Poverty),

From the fading shore, Sir John Quackmore
 Wigwagged a heartening jest,
As the gallant ship, her anchor arip,
 Fared forth on her fearsome quest.

Her course she set for dark Tibet
 And the fabled sands of Ind;
And on her poop hummed "Boop-a-doop"
 Rear Admiral Bigwind.

And guiding the craft from the wheel abaft,
 While she raced for the glittering Strand,
As he sang solo "Heigh-ho, heigh-ho,"
 Was the second in command.

In charge of the guard and the big Mainyard
 Was Able Seaman Luce,
While with punitive welts to Tan the pelts
 Of the sinners, Helmsman Spruce.

The cabin squib—he manned the jib,
 The sheet that points the way—
His meed to earn. He's cash to Burn—
 O you twenty bucks a day!

II

THE PILOT BUMPS A SNAG

On a humorous jag, the pilot wag
 To his shipmates brought whoopee,
Till the law stepped in, pronounced it sin
 And laid him across its knee;

But a generous dole from THE PEOPLE'S roll
To plaster a painful spot—
A hefty hunk—four thousand plunk—
It sure should help some—what?

That genial jinn, good Uncle Wynne,
To leadership aspired;
He spiced the spree with TNT,
But he, too, was retired.

With lowered pates, his saddened mates
Told him their long farewells;
And at midnight he vanished quite
As the bo'sun piped "Eight Bells!"

III

THE CLOUDS DISPERSE

Time passed. Each week seemed drear and bleak,
Of mirth there was a lack;
Aboard the stout ship Howling Gale,
None dared a joke to crack.

Came an April day—or was it May?—
And a hail from the topmast head
And over the side in manly pride,
Like one back from the dead

Stepped the absentee—now a hero, he—
To the lusty cheers of the men,
And Admiral Bill, from the deckhouse sill,
Roared, "Welcome home again!

"We'll celebrate our valiant mate—
Come, comrades, let us prance,
And also toast our Sovereign State—
What ho! On with the dance!

“ ‘Should auld acquaintance’—I’ll say not!
We hain’t that way inclined;
Oh boy, oh boy, pray let our joy,
Like Joe, be unconfined!”

IV CAVIAR FOR THE GODS

The cook See Lo, in his niche below,
He blended a nifty brew
Of Prosperity Bonds and Covenant fronds
And Credit House cocktails, too,
Of Dividends and odds and ends—
Oh, he was a crafty knave!—
And a couple of sacks of Production Tacks
For a thumping measure he gave—
A brimming vat of this and that
Most wonderful to see.
As he stirred the mix with deft chopsticks
He warbled in fiendish glee:
“At the beat of my gong to the board they throng
To sample my quail on toast,
For they’re mostly rubes with a spatter of boobs
And they don’t know rind from roast!
“But I fear me much I must make my touch—
Get mine while the touching’s good,
Or my banking bunk may leave me sunk
As it’s prophesied it would;
“For that wise old bird, P. T., averred,
‘You can fool ’em half the time,’
But the day will come when you’re out to run,
And not only run but climb,

"When you'll pound the trail for the sheltered vale
And the timber's topmost branch,
While hot on your track like a hungry pack
Pours a human avalanche.

"In dreams at night I see this flight
And it sure gives me the creeps;
So oh, See Lo, you'd better go—
You sorely need some sleeps!"

But Admiral Bill, whose doughty will
Oft bent but never broke,
Whose rhino hide all barbs defied,
Hitched up his breeks and spoke:

"My hearties all, whate'er befall
Let nothing you dismay,
But like Columbus, headed west,
Sail on, sail on for aye!

"We'll make the haven, never fear,
So give your doubts the boot;
We'll revel in the tax on beer
And hand the foe the hoot;

"We'll crash the line 'twixt thine and mine—
We'll serve our pockets well:
As for our wicked enemies,
They'll surely land in Prince Albert.

"So luff the halyards, spank the boom,
We'll wear from dusk to dawn—
Bend every stitch of canvas wide—
Sail on! Sail on! Sail on!"

V
TROUBLE IN THE FO'C'S'LE

Three years the Gale, in crowded sail,
She tramped the tumbling tide
(The charge that she was out for kale
Her skipper stout denied);

She padded west, then northward pressed,
Her course she held amain,
And after she had trundled south
She ambled north again.

For making hash of hard-earned cash
Some sought—their purpose rank—
Of By-and-Large to rid the barge—
To make Bill walk the plank.

But Bill said: "Nix; my bag of tricks
With fast ones is supplied,
I'll pull one out, then watch the rout—
I'll take 'em for a ride!"

He would—he did their bet outbid,
Their ducats intercept;
THE PEOPLE saw and whooped "Hurrah!—
At last one promise kept!"

Says Bill: "Our bait, once voted great,
Today just rates a laugh;
New magic we must fabricate
If we'd evade the gaff.

"The ribald hive, for Twenty-Five,
Like slaving jackals howl,
And when to win a grin I strive
All I can get's a scowl.

"Since we've abolished Poverty
 (Or have we—I don't know;
I may be out—there seems some doubt,
 But I'll enquire of Joe);

"My hardworked henchmen all agree
 (They've held the wolf at bay)
That Plenty everywhere they see
 Since we stepped up our pay.

"But there's the rabble: we must hark—
 We've got all tastes to suit—
To each unseemly, rude remark
 We'll feed 'em tutti fruit.

"A favored land by zephyrs fanned
 Lies east as flies the crow;
It's named Saskatch—an easy snatch
 For such as we—let's go!

"With honeyed words we'll charm those birds;
 Their leaders all they'll flout;
Their High Mogul our umpire, Mull,
 Will bawl: 'T'ree strikes—you're out! "

VI

THE CREW LANDS ON A FOREIGN SHORE

A starlit night, a murmuring bight,
 Hardby Camp Saskatoon;
They swift debarked and safely parked
 To wait the tardy moon.

Right on the dot (as like as not)
She rose. "The prospect thrills,"
Says Bill; "to luck let's lift a tot—
There's gold in them thar hills!

"The pampered foe is soon to know
Our arms they cannot match;
Their martial will we'll quickly still—
We'll Ethiop Saskatch!

"Their wretched State we'll renovate—
It's cursed with many ills—
Now here's our chance to demonstrate
The worth of S. C. pills.

"Fall in! Form rank! and on their flank
We'll strike before they're wise;
The battle's won ere it's begun—
We'll stun 'em at sunrise!

"An empire great we'll next create,
Raise a triumphal arch:
To valorous deeds your Admiral leads—
Mes enfants—forward—March!"

VII

BUT ARE BLUDGEONED BY THE SAVAGES

Surprise there was—an ominous buzz,
A sound to cause alarm
To filibusters seeking gold
And headed straight for harm;

The savages of wild Saskatch,
With war cries shrilling high,
Swarmed to the fray to lift their thatch
And smite them hip and thigh.

From early light they pressed the fight—

 This is a gruesome tale—

And many a scalp was lost ere night

 On Bigwind's windy trail:

In full retreat, on frenzied feet

 They fled, his hectoring crew—

Such as were left. "I'm sore bereft—

 A pretty how-de-do!"

Says Bill: "I wot I'm on the spot;

 Instead of garnering cheers—

Alas—alack!—when we sail back

 All I can see is jeers.

"Our plans first-rate to celebrate

 Are punctured all to—well,

I'm not a man to profanate—

 I'll just say—Heatherbell!"

VIII

"SHE SUNK AT SUNDOWN"

With deep concern you wait to learn,

 No doubt, how ends this cruise;

So know, when she stood out to sea

 The Gale was in the news.

She'd sprung aleak off Mozambique—

 Was, so to say, on bail;

Though in the dumps they'd manned the pumps,

 Refreshed with ginger ale;

It's feeble stuff—not stout enough

 To make your G string hum,

Or fill a gap or give you snap:

 It can't compare with rum.

But this aside. Alberta's Pride
From port had drifted far;
Now in distress, shunned by success,
She lay for Zanzibar.

But— horrid spite!— as fell the night
Down where the trade winds blow,
A baleful barrier hove in sight—
The privateer Ben Bow.

A sullen boom, and in the gloom
A shell passed whining by,
A warning stern the Gale to turn—
Hers not to reason why.

With will perverse, from bad toward worse
Her course the ship pursued;
To caution heed Bill saw no need—
He wasn't in the mood.

The privateer drew quickly near;
Three times her Creusots spoke
To halt the Gale, and then a hail
Across the water broke:

"Haul down your flag, that fatuous rag,—
The step's long overdue—
It's ever been a senseless tag—
The Jack's the proper hue.

"And man your boats while yet she floats—
Unless you've got a whim
To stop aboard and watch her gored—
You'd perhaps prefer to swim?

"I much regret this move—and yet
Orders must be obeyed:
These Creusot toys make quite a noise—
But pray don't be afraid!"

They scrambled down the vessel's side —
Bigwind looked sad and wan:
A roar, a flash, a hiss, a crash—
And then the Gale was gone!

From out the brine they fished up nine,
Next morning twenty-four,
And the ship that bravely sailed away
Returns, ah, never more!

* * * *

By the sad sea waves where the ocean laves
The shores of old Cathay,
An ancient tar attention craves
From all who pass that way.

He holds them with a glittering eye
And motions out to sea,
They naught but emptiness descry—
"There was a ship—" quoth he.

*This is the tale of the Howling Gale:
She sailed the uncharted main;
If she left her bones with Davy Jones
The reason appears quite plain.*

The End.

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